

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 03946 101854Z

71

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 3946

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP, IT

SUBJECT: ROME MEETING OF SPANISH OPPOSITION

REF: STATE 054444

1. AT THE INVITATION OF THE ITALY-SPAIN COMMITTEE, A DELEGATION OF SPANISH OPPOSITION LEADERS VISITED ROME FROM FEBRUARY 24-26. FOLLOWING THE VISIT TO ROME, WHICH RECIPROCATED A VISIT BY AN ITALIAN GROUP OF THE COMMITTEE TO SPAIN IN DECEMBER, THE DELEGATION VISITED NAPLES AND TURIN. MEMBERS OF THE SPANISH DELEGATION WHICH CONSISTED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF TWO MAJOR OPPOSITION GROUPINGS (DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE OF SPAIN AND PLATFORM OF DEMOCRATIC CONVERGENCE) WERE: SANTIAGO CARRILLO, SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY, JUAN ENCINAR, NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE POPULAR SOCIALIST PARTY, JOSE VIDAL BENEYTO, SOCIALIST ALLIANCE, RAFAEL CALVO SERE, MONARCHIST-LIBERAL, NAZARIO AGUADO, LABOR PARTY, LUIS URUNUELA, SOCIALIST ALLIANCE OF ANDALUSIA, JOSE MARIA JEREZ, SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY, ENRIQUE MUGICA, SPANISH SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY, LUIS ALONZO NOVO, GENERAL UNION OF WORKERS, JOSE LUIS FONTELA, DEMOCRATIC UNION OF VALENCIA, CARLOS ALONZO DE VELASCO, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, IGNACIO CAMUNAS, POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY, ARMANDO SACRISTAN, SPANISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC UNION, SABALA SUFFIA, CARLIST PARTY, AND EUGENIO DEL RIO, SPANISH COMMUNIST MOVEMENT.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ROME 03946 101854Z

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE SPANISH GROUP WAS RECEIVED BY LEADERS OF ALL THE PARTIES OF THE SO-CALLED DEMOCRATIC ARC (LIBERALS THROUGH THE COMMUNISTS) PLUS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EXTRA/PARLIAMENTARY GROUP PDUP. ADDITIONALLY, IT MET WITH THE PRESIDENTS OF THE TWO CHAMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT, WITH UNDER-SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FRANCESCO CATTANEI IN HIS ROLE AS A MEMBER OF THE PARLIAMENT, AND WITH OFFICIALS OF THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION FEDERATION.

3. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE VISIT, THE GROUP ISSUED A JOINT COMMUNIQUE WITH ITS ITALIAN SPONSORS AND HAD A PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH WAS PRESIDED OVER BY SOCIALIST LEADER PIETRO NENNI, CHAIRMAN OF THE ITALY-SPAIN COMMITTEE. THE COMMUNIQUE, INTER ALIA, SPOKE OF A COMMON STRUGGLE FOR A SPAIN FREE FROM FRANCO INFLUENCES AND A MUTUAL COMMITMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT IN SPAIN OF AN AUTHENTIC DEMOCRACY. THE SPAIN SIDE ALSO SPOKE OF A NEW PHASE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR A DEMOCRATIC SPAIN WHICH WOULD INVOLVE THE FORMATION OF A UNIFIED TRADE UNION MOVEMENT RESPECTING THE EQUALITY OF THE VARYING POLITICAL FORCES. FOR ITS PART THE ITALY-SPAIN COMMITTEE COMMITTED ITSELF TO MAKING AN ADDITIONAL EFFORT TO MOBILIZE SUPPORT FOR CERTAIN GOALS OF THE SPANISH OPPOSITION INCLUDING THE LIBERATION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, THE RETURN OF EXILES TO THEIR COUNTRY, A GENERAL AMNESTY, THE FULL RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL AND LABOR RIGHTS, AND LIBERTY FOR ALL POLITICAL GROUPS WITHOUT ANY EXCEPTION. FINALLY BOTH GROUPS AGREED THAT THEY ARE CONVINCED OF THE NEED FOR SPAIN TO OCCUPY THE "ROLE THAT BELONGS TO IT IN A DEMOCRATIC EUROPE ON THE DAY IN WHICH THE SPANISH PEOPLE WILL HAVE RECONQUERED THE FUNDAMENTAL LIBERTIES AND THE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS."

4. A RESPONSIBLE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL HAS INFORMED US THAT THERE WERE NO OFFICIAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE VISITING GROUP AND THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE MEETING BETWEEN THE GROUP AND UNDERSECRETARY CATTANEI TOOK PLACE AT THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND NOT AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THEREFORE DID NOT HAVE AN OFFICIAL ASPECT ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT THE WAY THAT SOME SECTIONS OF THE PRESS INTERPRETED THE ENCOUNTER. OUR SOURCE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE CONTENTS OF THE TALKS WHICH THE SPANIARDS HAD WITH THEIR VARIOUS

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PAGE 03 ROME 03946 101854Z

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